

The following listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended): An antimicrobial pigment ~~Antimicrobial pigments~~, obtainable by agitating a suspension, said pigment comprising one or more inorganic pigments and silver oxide as an antimicrobial compound.

2. (Currently Amended): An antimicrobial pigment ~~Antimicrobial pigments~~ according to claim 1, ~~characterized in that the~~ wherein said on or more inorganic pigments are in each case pigment is platelet-shaped, spherical or needle-shaped.

3. (Currently Amended): An antimicrobial pigment ~~Antimicrobial pigments~~ according to claim 1, ~~characterized in that the~~ wherein said on or more inorganic pigments are inorganic white pigments, inorganic coloured pigments, inorganic black pigments, effect pigments, luminous pigments, magnesium carbonate, mica, SiO₂, TiO₂, aluminium oxide, glass, micaceous iron oxide, oxidised graphite, aluminium oxide-coated graphite, basic lead carbonate, barium sulphate, chromium oxide, or MgO.

4. (Currently Amended): An antimicrobial pigment ~~Antimicrobial pigments~~ according to claim 3, ~~characterized in that the~~ wherein said effect pigments are based on substrates.

5. (Currently Amended): An antimicrobial pigment ~~Antimicrobial pigments~~ according to claim 4, ~~characterized in that the~~ wherein said substrates are selected from ~~the group of~~ natural or synthetic mica, SiO₂, TiO₂, BiOCl, Aluminium oxide, glass, micaceous iron oxide, graphite, oxidised graphite, aluminium oxide coated graphite, basic lead carbonate, barium sulphate, chromium oxide, BN, MgO, magnesium fluoride, Si₃N₄, and ~~and/or~~ metals.

6. (Currently Amended): An antimicrobial pigment ~~Antimicrobial pigments~~ according to claim 5, ~~characterized in that the~~ wherein said substrates additionally are coated with one or more layers of BiOCl and/or transparent, semitransparent or opaque, selectively

absorbing, ~~or~~ nonselectively absorbing or nonabsorbing metal oxides, metal suboxides, metal oxide hydrates, metals, metal nitrides, metal oxynitrides, metal fluorides and/or mixtures of these materials.

7. (Currently Amended): An antimicrobial pigment ~~Antimicrobial pigments~~ according to claim 6, ~~characterized in that the~~ wherein said one or more layers of BiOCl and/or transparent, semitransparent or opaque, selectively absorbing, ~~or~~ nonselectively absorbing or nonabsorbing metal oxides, metal suboxides, metal oxide hydrates, metals, metal nitrides, metal oxynitrides, metal fluorides and/or mixtures of these materials are arranged as alternating layers of:

transparent, semitransparent or opaque, selectively absorbing, ~~or~~ nonselectively absorbing or nonabsorbing metal oxides, metal suboxides, metal oxide hydrates, metals, metal nitrides, metal oxynitrides, metal fluorides and/or mixtures of these materials or BiOCl with a refractive index $n > 1.8$, and

transparent, semitransparent or opaque, selectively absorbing, ~~or~~ nonselectively absorbing or nonabsorbing metal oxides, metal suboxides, metal oxide hydrates, metals, metal nitrides, metal oxynitrides, metal fluorides and/or mixtures of these materials with a refractive index $n \leq 1.8$.

8. (Currently Amended): An antimicrobial pigment ~~Antimicrobial pigments~~ according to claim 6, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the outer layer of the inorganic pigment comprises a transparent, semitransparent or opaque, selectively absorbing, ~~or~~ nonselectively absorbing or nonabsorbing metal oxide, metal suboxide, metal oxide hydrate and/or a mixture of these materials.

9. (Currently Amended): An antimicrobial pigment ~~Antimicrobial pigments~~ according to claim 6, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the transparent, semitransparent or opaque, selectively or nonselectively absorbing or nonabsorbing metal oxides, metal suboxides, metal oxide hydrates, metals, metal nitrides, metal oxynitrides, metal fluorides and/or mixtures of these materials additionally contain organic and/or inorganic colorants or elements as dopant.

10. (Currently Amended): An antimicrobial pigment ~~Antimicrobial pigments~~

according to claim 1, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the inorganic pigment comprises spherical particles or spherical capsules of metal oxides, BiOCl, magnesium carbonate, graphite, oxidised graphite, aluminium oxide-coated graphite, basic lead carbonate, barium sulphate, BN, magnesium fluoride, Si₃N₄, and/or metals.

11. (Currently Amended): An antimicrobial pigment ~~Antimicrobial pigments~~ according to claim 10, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the spherical particles or capsules are coated with one or more layers of transparent, semitransparent or opaque, selectively or nonselectively absorbing or nonabsorbing metal oxides, metal suboxides, metal oxide hydrates, metals, metal nitrides, metal oxynitrides, metal fluorides, and/or mixtures of these materials.

12. (Currently Amended): An antimicrobial pigment ~~Antimicrobial pigments~~ according to claim 1, ~~characterized in that they are~~ wherein said pigment is additionally coated with a protective coating layer.

13. (Currently Amended): An antimicrobial pigment ~~Antimicrobial pigments~~ according to claim 12, ~~characterized in that the~~ wherein said protective coating is selected from silica, silicates, borosilicates, aluminosilicates, alumina, aluminum phosphate, and ~~or~~ mixtures thereof.

14. (Currently Amended): An antimicrobial pigment ~~Antimicrobial pigments~~ according to claim 1, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein L, a and b values represent the lightness, redness-greenness, and yellowish-bluish values, respectively, and the values for L, a, and b for said of the employed inorganic pigments and the antimicrobial pigments have a maximum deviation for the L value of $-6 \leq \Delta L \leq 6$, for the a value of $-5 \leq \Delta a \leq 5$ and for the b value of $-5 \leq \Delta b \leq 5$.

15. (Currently Amended): An antimicrobial pigment ~~Antimicrobial pigments~~ according to claim 1, ~~characterized in that the~~ wherein said silver oxide is substituted by silver halogenide, silver nitrate, silver sulfate, silver carboxylates, silver carbonate, silver citrate, copper oxides, copper sulfide, copper nitrate, copper carbonate, copper sulfate, copper

halogenides, copper carboxylates, zinc oxide, zinc sulfide, zinc silicate, zinc acetate, zinc chloride, zinc nitrate, zinc sulfate, zinc gluconate, zinc citrate, zinc phosphate, zinc propionate, zinc salicylate, zinc lactate, zinc oxalate, zinc iodate, zinc iodide, or combinations thereof.

16. (Currently Amended): An antimicrobial pigment ~~Antimicrobial pigments~~ according to claim 1, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the amount of the antimicrobial compound is in the range of 0.001 to 10 % by weight, ~~preferably between 0.005 and 5% by weight~~, based on the inorganic pigment.

17. (Currently Amended): A method ~~Method~~ for the preparation of antimicrobial pigments comprising: agitating the agitation of a suspension comprising one or more inorganic pigments and silver oxide as antimicrobial compound.

18. (Currently Amended): A method ~~Method~~ according to claim 17, ~~characterized in that the~~ wherein said preparation is performed in water, ethanol, methanol, 1-propanol, 2-propanol and/or mixtures thereof.

19. (Currently Amended): A method ~~Method~~ according to claim 17, ~~characterized in that the~~ wherein said preparation is performed at a temperature is between 10 and 60°C.

20. (Currently Amended): A method ~~Method~~ according to claim 17, ~~characterized in that the~~ wherein said silver oxide is substituted by silver halogenide, silver nitrate, silver sulfate, silver carboxylates, silver carbonate, silver citrate, copper oxides, copper sulfide, copper nitrate, copper carbonate, copper sulfate, copper halogenides, copper carboxylates, zinc oxide, zinc sulfide, zinc silicate, zinc acetate, zinc chloride, zinc nitrate, zinc sulfate, zinc gluconate, zinc citrate, zinc phosphate, zinc propionate, zinc salicylate, zinc lactate, zinc oxalate, zinc iodate, zinc iodide, or combinations thereof.

21. (Currently Amended): A method ~~Method~~ according to claim 17, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the amount of the antimicrobial compound is in the range of 0.001 to 10 % by weight, ~~preferably between 0.005 and 5% by weight~~, based on the inorganic pigment.

22. (Currently Amended): ~~A method~~ Method according to claim 17, ~~characterized in that the~~ wherein said antimicrobial pigments are further coated with a protective coating layer.

23. (Currently Amended): ~~A method~~ Method according to claim 22, ~~characterized in that the~~ wherein said protective coating is selected from silica, silicates, borosilicates, aluminosilicates, alumina, aluminum phosphate, and ~~or~~ mixtures thereof.

24. (Currently Amended): ~~A method~~ Method according to claim 22, ~~characterized in that the~~ wherein said protective coating is applied ~~performed~~ wet-chemically.

25. (Currently Amended): ~~In a method of inhibiting Use of antimicrobial pigments according to claim 1 for the inhibition of the growth and/or progeny of microorganisms by applying an antimicrobial agent, the improvement wherein said antimicrobial agent is an antimicrobial pigment according to claim 1.~~

26. (Cancelled);

27. (Cancelled);

28. (Currently Amended): ~~A method according to claim 25, wherein said Use according to claim 26 characterized in that the~~ antimicrobial pigments are employed in combination with preservatives ~~and~~ and/or one or more other antimicrobial agent agents.

29. (Currently Amended): ~~A method according to claim 25, wherein said Use according to claim 26 characterized in that the~~ antimicrobial pigments are employed in combination with one or more antibiotic agents ~~antibiotics~~.

30. (Currently Amended): ~~A method~~ Use according to claim 29, ~~characterized in that the antibiotics~~ wherein said one or more antibiotic agents are selected from the group of Beta-lactam, Vancomycin, Macrolides, Tetracyclines, Quinolones, Fluoroquinolones, Nitrated

compounds, Aminoglycosides, Phenicols, Lincosamids, Synergistins, Fosfomycin, Fusidic acid, oxazolidinones, Rifamycins, Polymixynes, Gramicidins, Tyrocydine, Glycopeptides, Sulfonamides, and ~~or~~ Trimethoprim

31. (Currently Amended): In a method of performing oral care using a dentifrice, mouthwash, toothpowder, chewing gum, lozenge, mouth spray, floss, dental paint, or glass ionomer cement formulation, the improvement wherein said formulation contains an Use of antimicrobial pigment pigments according to claim 1 for oral care.

32. (Currently Amended): In a method for Use of antimicrobial pigments according to claim 1 for the prophylaxis and/or treatment of herpes infections by applying a formulation to infected areas, the improvement wherein said formulation contains an antimicrobial pigment according to claim 1.

33. (Cancelled):

34. (Cancelled):